

The Magic Lantern Gazette

Volume 18, Number 3 Fall 2006



Dick Moore Collection

The Magic Lantern Society of
the United States and Canada

www.magiclanternsociety.org



Life is a Magic Lantern

The world is like a magic lantern, or the shifting scenes of a pantomime. *Ten years* converts the population of schools into men and women, the young into fathers and mothers, make and mar fortunes, and bury the last generation but one. *Twenty years* converts infants into fathers and mothers, render youth the operative generation, decide men's fortunes and distinctions: convert active men into drawling drivellers, and bury all the preceding generation. *Thirty years* raise an active generation from non-entity, change fascinating beauties into merely bearable old women, convert lovers into grand-fathers and grand-mothers, and bury the active generation, or reduce them to decrepitude and imbecility. *Forty years* alas! Change the face of all society, infants are growing old, the bloom of youth and beauty has passed away: two active generations have been swept away from the stage of life; names so cherished have been forgotten, and unsuspected candidates for fame have started from the exhaustless womb of nature. *Fifty years*, why should any desire to retain their affections from maturity for fifty years? It is to behold a world which they do not know, and to which they are unknown; it is to live, to weep for the generations passed away, for lovers, for parents, for children, for friends in the grave; it is to see every thing turned upside down by the fickle hand of fortune, and the absolute despotism of time; it is, in a word, to behold the vanity of life, in all its varieties of display.

Friends' Weekly Intelligencer,
July 13, 1850

This somewhat downbeat magic-lantern view of life was published repeatedly in 19th Century periodicals, especially various Christian magazines. Apparently whenever editors had a little extra space available, they thought it wise to remind readers of the inevitability of generational change and eventual decline into decrepitude. I am well past my 50th year, as are many members of our society, but one can only hope we are not in such bad shape as this passage suggests (people didn't live as long in the 19th Century). As a society devoted to the preservation and enjoyment of artifacts from the past, we are aware that generations change, interests shift, and old technologies fade away, only to be replaced by others than eventually disappear as well.

The magic lantern has long since faded from widespread use, and its successor, the 35 mm slide projector, is now nearly extinct as well. Even cinema on film is disappearing, gradually being replaced by digital imaging. Similar changes have occurred in the way we produce our journal. With the changing of the editorial guard after 10 years of heroic efforts by Bob and Sue Hall to keep the *Gazette* filled with interesting material on the magic lantern, it seemed appropriate to experiment with a new look for the journal. This issue introduces color onto the front and back pages and a new look inside as well.

This issue is devoted mostly to our Seattle convention, but I hope in future issues to include more articles on the history and use of the magic lantern, more frequent book reviews, literary and historical selections from 19th Century books and periodicals, and special features that tell the stories of unusual magic lanterns, sets of slides, or printed images. Members and readers are encouraged to continue contributing interesting visual materials for the *Gazette*, preferably accompanied by information about the source of the images and the owner. Research articles are most useful if fully documented with references, and they should include full contact information for the author to facilitate communication between readers and authors.

Beginning with this issue, I will maintain an electronic archive of all future issues as PDF files that can be easily transmitted electronically. I welcome your comments on the continuing evolution of the *Gazette*, as well as your contributions, which can be sent to me by mail or e-mail.

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Terry Borton produces his own magic-lantern shadow show during the evening presentation of *Christmas in July* by the American Magic-Lantern Theater.

Photo by Dick Moore

In 1979, a number of Seattle area residents, including Joe Koch, Alice Koch, and Bob Bishop, joined forces to form the Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada. Joe Koch is gone now, but both Alice Koch and Bob Bishop attended this year's convention, presided over by current President Sharon Koch, and the formal proceedings of the convention opened with some humorous welcoming remarks by Alice. This was the second national convention to be held in Seattle, the first having been in 1989, exactly ten years after the founding of the society.

This year, the local committee (Sharon and Mike Koch, Ron and Dorothy Easterday, Ralph and Judie Shape, Bob and Sue Hall, Larry Cederblom, and Shel Izen) truly outdid themselves by putting on a splendid convention that will be a hard act to follow in future years. Not only did they arrange for perfect weather, but they also attended to every small detail, from the exhibits and the curtain over the slide screen (designed by Larry Cederblom) to the beautiful magic-lantern lamp centerpieces that adorned the banquet tables (designed and constructed by Ron Easterday and Judie Shape).

In addition to great food and social interactions, the convention provided opportunities for buying and selling magic lanterns, slides, and other ma-

terial, useful workshops on making, caring for, and restoring lanterns and slides and transferring slides to DVD. We also were treated to a well-balanced program that blended lectures on new research with humorous and artistic shows and recreations of 19th Century travelogues. No convention would be complete without the closing show by the American Magic Lantern Theater, and this year's presentation, *Christmas in July*, left the audience cheering and may have recruited several new members for the society.



Society co-founder Alice Koch greets the crowd of magic-lantern enthusiasts on the first morning of the convention. Photo by Kentwood D. Wells



Dick Balzer (above) regaled the crowd with tales of the unknown lanternist Isadora Stein, while Dick Moore told us the truth about Victorian hotel rats and cats.



Photos by Kentwood D. Wells

Summary of the Program

In summarizing the program of the 2006 convention, I have departed from the recent tradition of printing individual reviews of each presentation, choosing instead to produce a narrative of the presentations based on the notes and comments of audience members. Because your editor neglected to ask people to review the various workshops that were presented, summaries of those events do not appear here, but those who attended them found them very useful. I have rearranged the order of talks so that major categories of presentations are grouped together. Many thanks to members who contributed their comments (in order of appearance): Don Curran, Dick Moore, Wendy Gronbeck, John Newman, Joanne Elsesser, Bob Hall, Mike Koch, Debbie Borton, Terry Borton, Fred and Rose Lockett, and Larry Rakow—The Editor.

Shows for Every Taste: Rats, Tigers, Peck's Bad Boy, and Isadora Stein

Dick Moore kicked off the first day's program by departing from his usual obsession with swine to entertain us with what must be the largest collection of slides of cats, rats, and dogs in the world. His show on "The Truth About Victorian Hotel Rats and Cats" made great use of a variety of photographic, colored, and moving slides, combined with

an original script, to describe the depredations of cats and rats in Victorian hotels and the usually futile attempts by the management to rid their establishments of these pests. Not wanting to disappoint the audience, Dick managed to slip at least one pig slide into his show. Later Dick presented a shorter show, mysteriously titled "Nursery Rhymes," which turned out to be photographs of the 2004 San Antonio meeting, especially Jack Judson's Magic Lantern Castle Museum, with Dick's own version of "The House that Jack Built."

Dick Balzer took Dick Moore's approach of writing an original script to fit his slides one step further by making up his script as he went along, using everyone else's slides. Wild, weird, wacky, wonderful. What else can you say (that's fit to print) about this interlude of serious humor? Drawing on the fortunate situation of finding 40 slides about Isadora Stein among the prized possessions of other convention goers, Dick deftly presented the "Life of Isadora Stein," the alleged long-lost child of Gertrude Stein, but which Gertrude Stein he didn't say. While he also didn't directly say it, it is obvious that he had more than just casual knowledge/relationship) with Isadora to be able to present the detailed intimacies of her life. Spanning her life from early childhood, including her work with photography and influence by Riis and others, covering the dark days of mental health issues – sharing her Rorschach expression and her passionate encounter

with Pig - to her solitude with nature, including fishing in the great Ravenstoke River (now known as the Revelstoke River) and to finding Art as life's passion, Dick adroitly covered the many ups and downs of her life. While we applauded his presentation (he was runner up to the Halls), we hope that by the next convention Richard's economic status improves, so he will finally be able to buy some slides of his own to use. This borrowing has got to stop. Afterall, the Hall's won the Damer Waddington Trophy using their own slides.

Bob and Sue Hall opened their presentation on "Peck's Bad Boy Exposed" with a poignant plea to be reinstated as respected researchers in the Magic Lantern Society, describing their presentation as the product of months of work with original source materials. Their story of the not-so-bad boy, Peck, was a relentless pursuit of a plot, delightfully brought to life by creative, in not befuddling, segues. Bushels, not Pecks, of puns led us through a Nature vs. Nurture tale that even managed to compare a Kosher torture chamber to the Epilady Hair Removal System. Creatively coping with a dilemma to which we all can relate—having too disparate a slide collection—the Halls demonstrated that living too close to the convention site leads to too much free time that can result in bizarre and even risqué musings. While there was not an immediate motion from the floor to elect them to the Research Committee, we all agreed that they certainly belong in the Magic Lantern Society Halls of Fame.

David and Leslie Evans did manage to combine serious historical research with an entertaining show in "A Tale of a Tub." Using several sets of slides to illustrate the misadventures of Mr. Short and Mr. Long with a tiger and a tub, David and Leslie alternated duet readings of poetry, with humorous asides, and a serious discussion of different versions of this remarkably long-lived story. They showed an astonishing array of different artistic treatments, from black and white to lithographed color and beautiful handpainted slides. Both Jonathan Swift and Charles Darwin entered into a tale stretching from 1704 to the early 20th Century, as they traced the evolution of both the story and the sets of slides used to illustrate it (for a detailed and

well-illustrated discussion of this research, see the March 2006 issue of the *Gazette*).

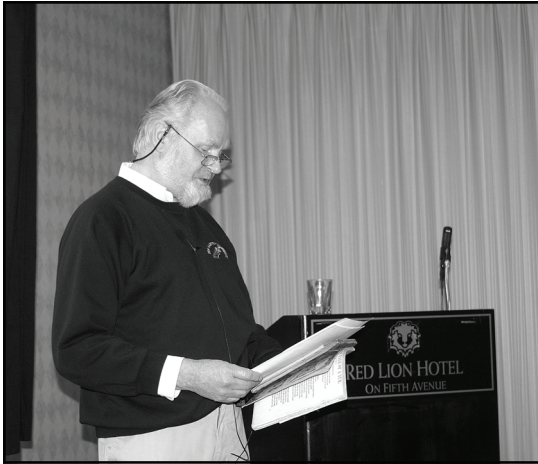


Bob and Sue Hall accepting the Damar Waddington Red-cabbage Award for their show on "Peck's Bad Boy Exposed."

Photo by Kentwood D. Wells

Reviving the Lantern-Slide Travelogue: Across Canada to Seattle and Alaska

Michael Lawlor literally recreated a lantern-slide travelogue in "The Canadian Alps, a Trip from Quebec to British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest in 1904." Dressed in period costume, Michael described his discovery of a large collection of lantern slides in a Montreal junk store, along with the original lecture notes of "Surrick Lincoln, Traveler." The slides, commissioned by the Canadian government and the railroads to promote tourism and immigration, were the work of several different photographers. The lanternist's travelogue took viewers across the Canadian prairies, with photographs of grain threshing, sheep grazing, horses, and cattle branding, as well as Blackfeet Indians and villages of teepees. We also were treated to panoramic scenes, some hand-colored, of mountains and valleys, including scenes Banff National Park, the Cascade Range, the Great Divide, Revelstoke, tourists climbing glaciers, mining towns, loggers, and the fishing industry. A professional artist and photographer, Michael also had on display at the convention a number of large art prints made from the most spectacular lantern slides in his show.



David Evans (left) combined serious research on the origins and history of “A Tale of a Tub” with a humorous and entertaining show. Michael Lawlor (right), in period costume, recreated the travels of a 19th Century lantern lecturer across the Canadian Rockies. Photos by Kentwood D. Wells

Paul Dorpat, a Seattle photographer and the foremost authority on historic photographs of the city, took us on tour of “Seattle, Then and Now.” Using photos from the past, many from lantern slides, he showed how various parts of Seattle have changed through the years. He began with the oldest known photograph of the city, an 1859 picture of the Henry and Sara Yessler home. He then moved on the growth of the city, from scenes of Indian canoes to the development of the waterfront, the Seattle fire and its aftermath, the complete removal of a major hill by washing it into Elliot Bay, and comparisons of old scenes with views of the same areas today. Seattle residents could recognize familiar sights, while visitors got a detailed look at the history of a city that, by East Coast standards, is very young indeed.

Dick Wood continued the travelogue motif on the convention’s second day with “Further Adventures in Alaska.” Once more, we were treated to some truly wonderful images of Alaska. Notably, we also learned, if we didn’t already know, that Dick’s grandfather Joe played for the Boston Red Sox, and is in fact a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame. Dick’s presentation included slides of the gold rush on the Yukon, a visit by John Muir in 1879 to Glacier Bay, scenes of early Alaska maritime vessels, log cabins, trading posts, Native American totem poles, an old Alaska gold-processing mill, a scene

of four Native American chiefs, a ship left high and dry as a result of the ebbing tide to accomplish work, people securing ice for drinks from glaciers, chunks of gold bricks, reindeer, Husky dogs, wildlife, and as concluding shot of a bear hugging a girl saying “Hug me close, George.” The slides were a potpourri of early Alaska and projected us back to a time of trying to make it up the Chilkoot Pass, making our way from the Seattle boomtown to the rich gold fields by vessel, and encountering the wild land, with its wildlife and abundant scenery.



Paul Dorpat presented a wide variety of historical photos of Seattle. Photo by Kentwood D. Wells

Without any mention of oil, Dick Wood proved that Seward's Folly, the purchase of Alaska from Russia, for a little over seven million dollars, was an extraordinary bargain.

From New York Photographers to Moving Panoramas: New Research on the Magic Lantern

Bruce Gronbeck, assisted by Wendy Gronbeck at the lantern, led off a varied selection of research talks with a detailed study of "The Journey of Jacob Riis's Magic Lantern Pictures Through Time." He described how the lantern slides of social reformer Jacob Riis have been used and viewed differently over the past 110 years. As a young reporter in the 1880s and 1890s, Riis became concerned with the plight of poor immigrants living in squalid tenements on the Lower East Side of New York. Lantern slides served as a medium through which Riis could advocate for social reform. He became a lecturer on the Christian church circuit, pushing for tenement reform. Bruce used two sections of Riis's original lecture script to demonstrate two styles of speaking with lantern slides. In one case, the pictures and photographs served as prompts for evocative stories about the life and times of the poor. Riis also used slides more explicitly, defining and further describing what the viewer saw. He made direct appeals to Christian churches to care for the poor and to establish slum schools, and a Fresh Air Fund, which still exists. Riis's images also appeared in his 1891 book, *How the Other Half Lives*, but much reduced in size and poorly reproduced, diminishing their impact. Some recent historians have disparaged Riis's work, arguing that he exploited the poor and accusing him of a kind of "Christian voyeurism." Bruce argued that these critics are rewriting history by taking Riis's pictures out of the context of time and place and ignoring his original purpose in taking the photographs.

Kentwood Wells described the work of a very different sort of photographer in his talk on "New York in a Flash: the Gigantic Illuminated Stage Pictures of Joseph Byron." Kent described the work of Joseph Byron, a British-born photographer who opened a studio in New York in 1888. Starting out as a general news photographer, Byron contributed to many periodicals, especially the weekly *Illustrated American*, one of the first of the illustrated weeklies to make ex-



Mulberry Bend by Jacob Riis. From *The Making of an American* (1901). Wells collection.

tensive use of photographs. Eventually he began to specialize in theater photography, using magnesium flash powder to illuminate large stage spaces. Rather than concentrate on individual actor portraits, Byron tried to re-create entire scenes from plays. His photos were published in many magazines and were used for illustrated souvenirs of plays and special "theater edition" books. In 1900, hundreds of Byron's photos were used to create a traveling lantern show, titled "Gigantic Illuminated Stage Pictures."



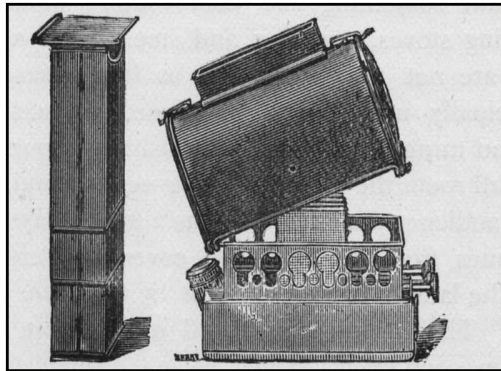
Byron lantern slide of the opening scene of *Pretty Peggy*, with Grace George in the role of 18th Century actress Peg Woffington.

Photo by Kentwood D. Wells



Karl Link uses one of the descendants of the magic lantern to describe the evolution of lighting technology for the lantern.

Below: Triple-wick sciopticon lamp with long chimney with improvements to increase air flow to the flames. From *The Art of Projection and Complete Magic Lantern Manual* (1893).

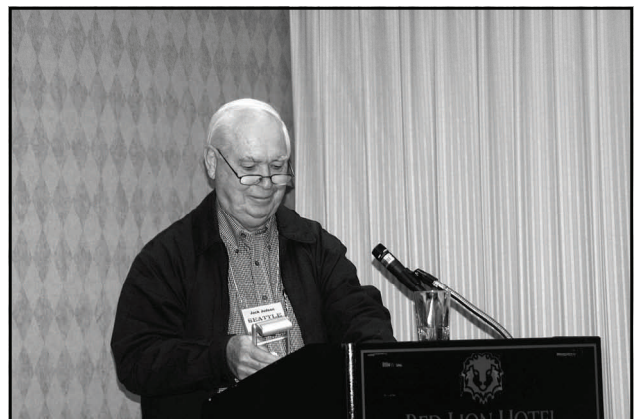


Photos by Kentwood Wells

Karl Link's ironically titled presentation (which has now spanned two conventions), "A Brief History of Light," was a continuation from the San Antonio convention. Using what he described as the nearly extinct technology of the overhead projector, itself a descendent of the magic lantern, Karl covered light sources from the early age of artificial light to the mid-1800s. Over most of this period, there was little improvement in the quality of lighting. Karl discussed the various parts of lamps, as well as the variety of fuels used, including whale oil and kerosene. Many early lamps were dangerous, creating vapors that could explode if not properly handled. The discovery of oil in Pennsylvania led to the production of kerosene, a relatively safe and dependable fuel for lamps, including those used in many magic lanterns. Various attempts were made to improve the performance of kerosene lamps, including the use of dual wicks, improvements in chimney shapes, and increases in air flow to the burning fuel. Only the introduction of brighter light sources, including limelight and electric lighting, made it possible to project very bright images from magic lanterns over long distances.

Jack Judson discussed an unusual sidelight of magic lantern history in his talk, "No Gold Yet." Everyone who collects magic lanterns knows about the hardware... the lanterns themselves...and the slides, of course, in British and American formats, stationary and movable, and some advanced collectors even delve into the literature surrounding the lantern...catalogs, books, and paper ephemera. It takes a real completist to tackle the history and collect samples of magic lantern medals and trophies. Needless to say, Jack Judson was up to the task! Jack projected images of bronze and silver medals

awarded for third and second place finishes in a variety of magic lantern slide contests held during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The lack of any gold first-place medals lent the talk its title. Jack saved the best for last: a silver trophy presented by the famed photographer Alfred Steiglitz and the Camera Club of New York to various recipients between 1897-1904 in their lantern slide championship. Jack once again nudged the boundaries of lantern slide scholarship just a bit further and presented an opportunity to see and learn about a little-known and rarely encountered lantern-related subject.



Jack Judson describes the various awards given for excellence in magic-lantern slide photography in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Photo by Kentwood D. Wells

Erkki Huhtamo's fascinating talk on "Magic Lanterns and Moving Panoramas in the 19th Century" was one of the highlights of the convention, providing new insights into the relationships among different visual media in the Victorian Era. Stating that most historians have treated different forms of visual entertainment in isolation, Erkki argued that studying the connections between different visual media can yield greater understanding of visual culture in general. He drew on a variety of sources, including early handbills and broadsides, newspaper accounts, and printed images to trace the parallel histories of the magic lantern and the moving panorama and the interactions between them. Moving panoramas originated from several sources, including moveable painted backdrops for stage plays and stand-alone visual attractions like the circular panorama. As the magic lanterns and moving panoramas competed for audiences, traveling panorama exhibitors often took pains to distinguish their offerings from magic lantern shows, advertising their affinities with the real art of painting on canvas. The introduction of photography was a special challenge to the moving panorama, providing an even more realistic view of the world than did painted images. At the same time, photography opened up new possibilities for the magic lantern, including the mass production of images, both original photographs and photographs of artwork that could be hand colored. The introduction of the term "stereopticon" in the 1860s may have been an attempt to capitalize on the popularity of stereoscopic photographs and to distinguish new forms of slides from cruder painted images of earlier magic lanterns.

Christmas in July

The formal program of the convention ended with another spectacular performance by the team from the American Magic-Lantern Theater (Terry Borton, Debbie Borton, and Nancy Stewart). In what may have been their most polished presentation ever, Prof. John Carter and company recreated a varied and thoroughly authentic Victorian magic lantern show, focused on the theme of "Christmas in July." Using dramatic readings, music, and audience participation, the show provided a varied feast of visual images, from illustrated Christmas carols and religious music to Christmas classics like Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, mostly illustrated with the beautiful slides of Joseph Boggs Beale (see back cover). The major "scenes" of the show were punctuated with interludes of comic moving slides that kept the audience engaged from beginning to end. Even a minor glitch with a burned-out projector bulb provided Terry with an opportunity to educate members of the audience in the workings of the dissolving lantern. The show was well attended by members of the public, and at least a few may have been induced to join our society.

ILLUSTRATED LECTURES!

Historical and Miscellaneous PAINTINGS

An Entertaining and Instructive Lecture will be delivered by

PROF. ALEXANDER

AT
ON **EVENING,** 1883

NOTICE TO PATRONS.—The best order will be preserved. Particular attention given to obtaining seats for ladies and children.

PROF. ALEXANDER will give an interesting and instructive Lecture, which will be splendidly illustrated by a large set of Illustrated Paintings, all finished in the best style of the art, which characterizes work of their class. They are not only unrivalled in beauty and excellence—in this respect surpassing most others—but are in addition eminently instructive. As will be seen from the programme given below, the series embrace a number of

SCENES FROM THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS,
Illustrative of events recorded in the Sacred Writings. Then will follow a number of

MAGNIFICENT MISCELLANEOUS VIEWS,
descriptive of various scenes and events, which cannot fail to interest the beholder—after which, at the close of the performance, will be exhibited a variety of thrilling incidents in the downward course of the Dramatic and Instructive, depicting in vivid colors the **EVILS OF INTemperance.**

All the scenes will be explained by the Lecturer as the Paintings pass in review before the audience. It is the design of the proprietor to make the Lectures and Exhibitions, in all their parts, from the commencement to the close, replete with instruction, that all who visit them may be benefited as well as interested by the entertainment.

PROGRAMME

FIRST PANORAMA: Paintings from the Old Testament.

Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise.	Abraham Offering Isaac.	Boaz's Servant in the Wilderness.
Wreck of Nineveh before the Flood.	Isaac and Esau.	Moses striking the Rock.
Jonah's Ark. Animals Entering.	Isaac's Death.	Jerusalem in her Grandeur.
Scene during the Deluge.	Children of Israel Crossing the Red Sea.	Isaac's Tomb.
Jonah's Sacrifice.	Destruction of Pharaoh and his Host.	

SECOND PANORAMA: Paintings from the New Testament.

An Angel Appears to the Shepherds.	The Crucifixion.	An Angel Shows Jerusalem to John.
Christ and the Samaritan Woman.	Death and the Pale Horse.	The Last Judgment.
The Prayer in the Garden.		

THIRD PANORAMA:
Assassination of President Garfield.

The Shooting in the R. R. Depot.	Portrait of Mrs. J. A. Garfield.	View of Lake View Cemetery.
Arrival of the Assassin.	Death of Garfield.	Cathedral, Cleveland.
Mrs. Smith carrying Garfield.	Garfield's Mother Reads Catalogue.	Lawsuit, Garfield House.
Portrait of C. C. Garfield.	President and Mrs. Garfield Looking out of Franklin's Cottage Window.	Funeral Car and Cathedral, Cleveland.

FOURTH PANORAMA: Miscellaneous.

COURTESHIP FOR SECOND WIFE.	HOW JONES BECAME A MASON.	Church of St. Peter, Rome.
1st. The Proposal.	1st. Starting for the Lodge.	Interior of St. Peter.
2d. Obstinacy of First Wife Appears.	2d. Taking the Oath.	Tower of London, England.
3d. Great Contention.	3d. Passing through the Degrees.	Tower on Fire.
	4th. Jones has become a Mason.	

FIFTH PANORAMA: Downward Course of the Drunkard.
FROM THE ORIGINAL BY G. CRUTCHER.

1st. The drunkard is taught by his mother the Morning Prayer.	1st. The Cost, misery and woe during the present child. They come themselves with the bottle.
2d. The bottle is set out for the first time. The husband is driven to the wall "just to take a drop."	2d. Fearful quarrels and brutal violence are the natural consequence of the frequent use of the bottle.
3d. The drunken husband.	3d. The husband is a fortune made of drunkenness kills his wife with the instrument of their misery.
4th. An execution scene of the greater part of their furniture.	4th. He destroyed his infant and his mother; it has brought the son and mother to ruin and to the street, and has left the father a helpless man.
5th. The drunkard is taught by his mother the Morning Prayer.	

SIXTH PANORAMA: The New Tale of a Tub.

SEVENTH PANORAMA: Comic.

Lying Duck Gilt for a Booby.	Something New.	Poor Children.
Being up with the Starch Out.	Jan.	Too Late for the Train.
Pig and Farmer's Nose.	Jammed.	The Unconquered of Single Life.
Going to see the Doctor.	New Dandy.	Conventions.
Taking off Boots.	Poor Dandy.	The Girl Left Behind Me.

Many of the views will occupy a space of from fifty to one hundred square feet, the whole presenting an appearance so natural and life-like that the beholder can easily believe the scenes illustrated a present reality.

The Public may rest assured that unless something should happen, the above programme will be fitted

TICKETS OF ADMISSION, 10 CTS.

CHILDREN UNDER 10 YEARS OF AGE, FREE.

DOORS OPEN AT 7.30 O'CLOCK P. M.

PRESENTS

A Canoe will be presented to the **LAZIEST MAN.**
A Bead Necklace to the **HANDSOMEST BABY.**
A Jewellery to the **UGLIEST MAN.**
And a Fine Album to the **MOST HANDSOME LADY.**

800—The candidates for the presents must all be present. The candidates for the Canoe and Harry will be put in nomination by a free vote of the Ladies, and for the Necklaces and Album by a free vote of the Gentlemen. The voting to be by ballot. After the nominations are made, the presents will be given to those receiving the most votes at 5 cents a vote; any one in the audience being entitled to vote as many times as he wishes, and can vote for any one who may receive a vote on the first ballot.

HAYES THOMAS, Advance Agent.

Broadside for Prof. Alexander's magic lantern show (1883), using the word "panorama" to describe different parts of the show.

Huhtamo collection



Society President Sharon Koch (right) presents special awards to Larry Cederblom (left) and Sue and Bob Hall for their many years of service in graphic design and editing of the *Gazette*.

Photo by Kentwood D. Wells

MAGIC LANTERN SOCIETY 2006 BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

JULY 9, 2006

Meeting called to order at 9:30 AM

Ralph Shape opened with memorial comments for Homer Peabody. These were followed by the reading of a letter from the Barnes Family Tennis Center Club, thanking the Society for its donation on behalf of Homer. Betty Peabody's sister Pat added her thoughts and this was followed by Betty's comments and thanks, and few humorous anecdotes about Homer and his Ice Cream contest and his debut in Gilbert & Sullivan, singing "Tell Me, Pretty Maiden."

The Minutes of the last meeting and the Treasures report were read by Dick Moore and approved.

The results of the election were announced, with the current officers being reelected for two-year terms: Sharon Koch, President; Larry Rakow, Vice President; Dick Moore, Treasurer and Secretary. Larry Rakow expressed great delight at having won his hard-fought campaign.

Web Site Discussion—Comments by Kent Wells, Terry Borton, Sue Hall, Randy Haberkamp, John Dalton, Sharon Koch, and Mike Koch indicated that what we need is a flashy first page with images that will attract attention, as well as material that will help attract new members. The current web site mostly provides information for current members, but there should be a reason for prospective members to go to the web site, and it

should provide more than information about the convention. Suggestions included a first page that comes up quickly and a separate members-only section. It was agreed that to upgrade the site would not be a great expense. Larry Cederblom will head a committee to review, redesign and upgrade the site. He is joined by Brian Rogers. They would like input from all members.

Research Committee: Report by Terry Borton—Many action plans are in the works. (1) Helping to focus the *Gazette* so that libraries and Universities would want it in their collection. (2) A Magic Lantern Invitational Conference May 29th & 30th 2007 – San Antonio, Texas, to involve the academic community and others interested in the Magic Lantern, and to encourage research, development and publication of research papers related to the history of the magic lantern, including its relationship to cinema. (3) Publications—Dick Balzer has a complete set of the 19th Century publication, *The Magic Lantern*, and has agreed to put it on a CD, most likely to be distributed by Steve Herbert's Projection Box publications. (5) Research Prize—Offer a prize for best magic lantern research. This is similar to what other professional/scholarly organizations do. A prize level of \$1,000 was suggested. Following some brief discussion, Terry indicated that prizes would only be given if warranted. If the committee felt that none of the papers presented was sufficiently meritorious to receive a prize, then no prize will be awarded. Discussion of how to fund the prize was followed by an announcement that a member had anonymously pledged a major donation, and there were other pledges as well. The details of the process will be worked out by the research committee. Susan Rakow indicated that placing a short limit on presentation would

not attract participants. (6) Bruce Gronbeck was asked to join the committee and accepted.

Dues—Sharon Koch pointed out that the dues had stayed at the same \$25 level for many years. The discussion that followed indicated a desire to raise the amount. Dick Balzer indicated that an increase of only \$5.00 would not be useful and moved that effective Jan 1, 2007, dues be increased to \$40, while maintaining the \$5 student rate. The motion was seconded by Kent Wells and approved unanimously.

Non-profit Status—Sharon Koch indicated that we have obtained non-profit status in the State of Washington and that we will be pursuing federal non-profit status. Jack Judson agreed to assist in this process. Non-profit status will afford the Society several advantages, including reduced mailing costs via bulk mailing, eliminating sales tax payments, and allowing for tax deductible donations to the Society, including qualifying for company matching gift programs.

Attracting New Members—Terry Borton suggested that we put an application blank on the reverse side of the Society's flyer. It also was suggested that members send the flyer to buyers of lanterns and slides that they sell to on EBay. Terry Borton has recruited five new members with this type of contact. Sara Dendas suggested that we establish a web site for children, and John Potter suggested that we may want to give kids some type of membership in the society or establish a family membership. Sharon Koch stated that we will establish a membership committee

Gazette—Kent Wells will take over the editorship and publication of the *Gazette*. Loud cheering was heard from the Halls.

Society Awards—Award presentations were made by Betty Peabody. The **Leora Wood Wells Research Award** went to Erkki Huhtamo for his talk on "Magic Lanterns and Moving Panoramas in the 19th Century." Karl Link was runner-up for his presentation on "A Brief History of Light, Part II." The **Joe Koch Historical Memorial Award** went to Bruce Gronbeck for "The Journeys of Jacob Riis's Magic Lantern Pictures Through Time." Kentwood Wells was runner-up for his talk, "New York in a Flash: The Gigantic Illuminated Stage Pictures of Joseph Byron." The **Red Cabbage - Damer Waddington Award** went to Sue and Bob Hall for their humorous show, "Peck's Bad Boy Exposed." Dick Balzer was runner-up for his "Life of Isadora Stein," an Unformed Magic Lantern Show.

Special Awards—Special awards were presented to Bob

and Sue Hall for their many years of editorial work on the *Gazette*, and to Larry Cederblom for his enormous contributions to the *Gazette* and the Society in graphic design.

2008 and 2010 Conventions—The next convention will be held in the Washington D.C., area, probably in the Virginia suburbs and most likely in late June or early July. Tom Rall is making the arrangements. Members expressed continued interest in Revelstoke, B. C. as a convention site. Issues relating to customs and transportation will be looked into.

Possible Name Change—A motion was made by Sue Hall to change the name of the Society to something shorter. The discussion that followed indicated that changing a name for an organization is not a matter to be taken lightly. As a result the motion was tabled.

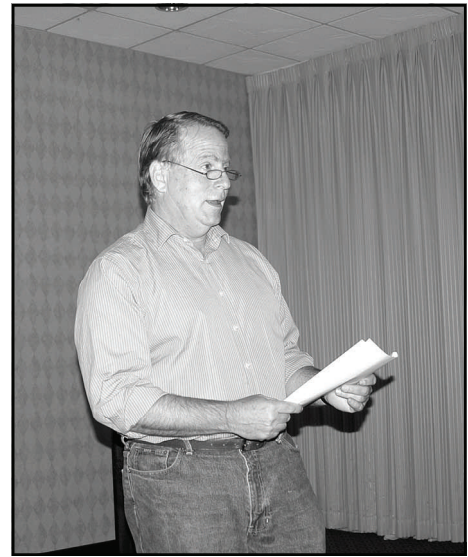
Closing Comments—Sharon Koch thanked the local committee for their hard work in putting the convention to together and making it run as smoothly as it did. A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

Submitted by Dick Moore, Secretary



Erkki Hutamo receiving the Leora Wood Wells Research Award from Betty Peabody.

Photo by Kentwood D. Wells



John Potter, Alice Koch, Bob Doran, and Randy Haberkamp look over items offered in the Sales Room by Larry Rakow (left). Larry later assumed his traditional duties as co-auctioneer with Dick Balzar (far right).

Photos by Dick Moore (left) and Kentwood D. Wells (right)

Auction Results 2006

Early Wood-Mounted Astronomy Slides	NS	Book: Natural Philosophy, 1844	\$15
2006 Magic Lantern Show Curtain	\$50	Book: Antique and Classic Cameras	\$15
Double Slip Slide...Lion	\$20	Wood-Mounted Slide: Jerusalem	NS
ICA Lantern	\$50	9 Movable Rackwork Astronomy Slides	\$500
Song Slides: Only Say You'll Love Me	\$40	Alabaster Victorian Peep Egg: Niagara Falls	\$150
Encyclopedia of Printing	NS	American Heritage Magazine: Ripley Article	\$10
Slide: Monkey with Bottle of Gargling Oil	\$20	12 Slides Old Mother Hubbard	NS
Poster: Stereopticon and Dissolving Views	\$60	Slides: Girl Who Wouldn't Get Married	\$80
Temperance Set Plus Reading: Cash Thre	\$120	7 Wood-Mounted Tiger & the Tub Slides	NS
Wood-Mounted Slide: Adieu	\$10	11 Hand-Painted Astronomy Slides	\$125
Lantern Slide: 4x5" Benograph Slide	\$60	2 Train Panorama Slides	\$30
Single Slip Slide: Danger	\$60	Book: One Day in a Child's Life	NS
4 Wood-Mounted Slides: Castles in Germany	\$10	Book: Peck's Bad Boy and His Pa, 1900	\$15
Book: Eyes, Lies, and Illusions	\$30	Set of 3 Slides: Political Cartoon	NS
2 Instructional Slides ML Operation	\$15	Wood Slide Box with Dividers (US Format)	\$5
3 Lanterns (2 in Boxes)	\$55	Wood-Mounted Slide: Geology	\$1
2 Slides: French Wedding Procession	NS	Panorama Slip Slide: Ships Past Volcano	\$40
Zoetrope Kit: Book About Pre-Cinema	\$15	8 Slide Boxed Set: Jack and the Beanstalk	\$40
Ten Lantern Slides: Anti-Filth and Disease	\$30	Mechanical Slide: Girl Jumps Rope	\$100
Slide Set: Never Ride a Strange Horse	\$35	Chromatrope	\$190
Primus Set: Uncle Tom's Cabin (7 of 8)	\$50	9 Hand-Colored Long Slides: Portraits, etc.	NS
2 Slip Slides: Rat Catcher & Monkey	\$160	Blue Projector With 5 Film Rolls	NS
Slide: Speech by President Coolidge	\$35	Book: The Lantern Image	\$20
Spencer Delineascope Lantern	\$30	Slides in Box: Old Mother Hubbard	\$35
Slide: St. Bernard Rescuing Traveler	NS	7 Slide Dissolve Set: Cross	NS
Wood-Mounted Slide: Horse & Carriage	\$15	Book: ML Society Ten Year Book, 1986	\$20
Wood-Mounted Slide: Pilgrim's Progress	\$5	Wood-Mounted Slide: Oasis	NS
Slide Box for 100 Slides, British Format	\$15	Boxed EP Slide Set with Script in German	\$15
		Book: Star-Spangled History...Beale	\$20
		Poster: Prof. Teel's War Views	\$35

Cardboard Box for Magic Lantern with label	\$25
Wood-Mounted Slide: Garden Scene	NS
The Book of the Lantern, 6 th Edition	\$60
3 Mechanical Slides: Elephant, Nose, Fish	\$40
2 Booklets: Cinema History	\$20
Slide Box for 50 Slides (US Format)	\$10
36" Long Pieces to Display Slides	\$5
Velox Box: Transparent Water Color Set	\$25
Comic Story Slide Set, Complete	\$20
Summer Landscape: Day and Night	\$5
2 Rackwork Slides: Fish/Heads	\$25
JLS Series in Box: Elephant's Revenge	NS
2 Metal Lever Slides: Viola/Broom	\$25
Book: To Catch a Sunbeam	\$15
Lantern Slide: Death in the Desert	\$17
12 Children's Toy Lantern Slides	\$12
Wood-Mounted Slide: Good Night	\$30
Wooden Slide Box	NS
Animatograph Lantern and Slides	\$50
Song Slides: Rainbow, 2 Boxes	\$110
Alice in Wonderland in Lantern Slides	\$25
J.F. Lantern in Box with 11 Slides	\$30
2 Small Chromatropes	\$25
10 Slides: 1893 Chicago World's Fair	\$25
Slide Maker Info (Still in Progress)	\$10
2 19 th Century Cloth Slide Carriers/Protectors	\$20
19 th Century Wooden Slide Box Plus 22 Slides	\$60
Metal Lantern Slide Case With 21 Slides	\$15
Lever Slide: See-Saw	\$60
Single Slip Slide: Dick Moore Special	\$55
Slip Slide: Cauliflower/Black Woman	NS
Book: The Lantern Image, Supplement #1	\$20
Mechanical Slide: Butterfly Chromatope	\$210
4 Mechanical Toy Wood-Mounted Slides	\$25
2 Slides: Rare Dissolve Set	NS
Lantern Slide: Full Moon, Rutherford	\$5
Lantern Slide: Band of Hope	\$1
19 th Century Wooden Slide Box & 22 Slides	\$55
Magic Lantern Broadside and 2 Tickets	\$60
2 Slides: Cow Meets Dog/Throws Dog in Air	\$10
Slide: ML Projecting Religious Message	\$25
Beale Slide Set: Roger and I, 5 Slides	NS
Book: Magic Lanterns, by Greenacre	\$8
2 Ad Slides & Shipping Box & Rate Card	\$45
Poster: Orange Magic Lantern Exhibition	\$10
Lantern Slide Box and Three Slides	\$15
Book: Movement in Two Dimensions	\$25
Lantern Slide: Indian Bison Hunt	\$1
Lantern Slide Set: Androcles and the Lion	\$5
Book: Lantern Slides and How to Make Them	\$10
Smithsonian Magazine: Song Slides/Ripley	\$8
Blotter: Keystone View Company	\$10
Christmas Announcement Slide	\$20
Large Chromatope	\$130
Book: Origins of the Motion Picture	\$7
Metal Lantern Slide Case With 21 Slides	\$10

Lantern Slides: 4 Mechanical Metal Toy Slides	\$15
3 Metal Slip Slides: Geese, Spill, Donkey	\$15
Green E.P. Lantern in Original Box & 12 Slides	\$70
3 Toy Chromatropes (2 Working)	\$50
4 Song Slides: Let the Rest of the World Go By	\$5
2 Slides: Napoleon in Exile & Vision of Troops	\$110
The Magic Moving Picture Book	\$15
7 Hand-Painted Wood Framed Slides in Box	\$35
Lantern Slide: Who Said Rats?	\$45
Lantern Slide Tray for 50 Slides	NS
Posters: Northwest Slides & History (8 Avail.)	\$10



Linde and Jack Judson enjoying some refreshments on the first night of the convention. Photo by John Potter.



Terry Borton (with Betty Peabody, Sharon Koch, and Alice Koch) offering a free lantern to anyone who would agree to present it to a young person as a new recruit for the society.

Photo by Kentwood D. Wells

Financial Report of the Magic Lantern Society 2006

Balance January 2005	\$6863.37
Income	
Dues	\$5719.66
Interest	\$7.01
Total Income	\$5726.67
Expenses	
Convention 2005	\$1509.14
Convention 2006	
Advance for hotel	\$2000.00
Invitations	\$71.80
Registration forms	\$48.97
Program	\$47.66
Special Printing	
New Flyer	\$684.04
Booklet <i>How to Make Slides</i>	\$1051.78
Booklet <i>How to Make Money</i>	\$540.74
Ballots	\$10.00
Subtotal Special Printing	\$2286.56
Web Site	\$50.00
Homer Peabody Donation	\$100.00
Sec. State Nonprofit Application	\$30.00
Membership booklet	\$264.96
Gazette Printing	\$1522.17
Gazette special photo	\$20.00
Gazette postage	\$920.24
Word Processing	\$609.40
Total Expenses	\$9569.90
Balance July 15, 2006	\$3020.14

**\$1,000 Prize
for
Magic-Lantern Research**

The Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada announces a \$1,000 yearly prize for the best research related to the magic-lantern by a graduate student in the United States or Canada. Winning papers must be at least 15 pages in length, and must not have been published previously. Papers will be judged by a committee of scholars on the basis of originality and substance. The winning paper will published by the Society, or reprinted if the author prefers to publish elsewhere. Other submitted papers may also be selected for publication or reprint.

Submit entries in both paper and electronic form to Dr. Erkki Huhtamo, UCLA Department of Media, 1100 Kinross Ave., Suite 245, Los Angeles, CA 90085-1456 (erhuhta@ucla.edu) by March 15, 2007.

**Call for Papers
Invitational Conference on the Magic Lantern
May 29-30, Magic Lantern Castle Museum, San
Antonio, Texas**

The Magic-Lantern Society of the United States and Canada is hosting an interdisciplinary academic conference on the magic lantern in America and Canada.

Of particular interest will be papers documenting the extent and nature of the use of the magic lantern itself, those relating it to other aspects of life and ideas at the time, and those exploring the connection to the movies. Academic affiliation is not a requirement for participation.

The conference will be held on May 29-30, 2007 at The Magic Lantern Castle museum in San Antonio, TX. The museum contains America's most extensive collection of magic lanterns, lantern slides, and related materials, and includes an large library of catalogs, trade journals, etc. Ample time will be allowed for exploring the museum's resources, and for informal exchanges.

Those interested in presenting should send a one-page proposal in electronic form to Dr. Erkki Huhtamo, UCLA Department of Media, 1100 Kinross Ave., Suite 245, Los Angeles, CA 90085-1456 (erhuhta@ucla.edu) by Jan. 1, 2007.



**Panoramaniacs in(vade) Holland
Report from the 14th International Panorama
Conference, The Hague, Holland**

Erkki Huhtamo

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Los Angeles, CA 90085-1456
erhuhta@ucla.edu

An interesting ‘parallel track’ to the magic lantern conferences organized by the lantern societies of the USA and Canada and the Great Britain are the international panorama conferences. Supported by an organization called the International Panorama Council (www.panoramapainting.com), they gather professionals operating panoramas, panorama painters, writers, researchers, educators and other “panoramaniacs”.

The two conferences I have attended (in 2004 at the Hunter College in New York and in early September 2006 in The Hague, Netherlands) have been very international, enthusiastic and well attended. Research papers on different aspects of panorama history have been balanced by more concrete talks about issues of conservation and more recent (including digital) applications of panoramic imagery. The general message seems to be: the panorama may have a rich and eminent past, but it also belongs to the present.

The most recent conference was locally organized by the Mesdag Panorama Foundation in The Hague. The Mesdag Panorama, painted by Hendrik Willem Mesdag in 1881 and completely preserved in its original rotunda, is one of the most important tourist attractions of the city of The Hague and a national treasure. In addition to the gorgeous circular panorama itself, the building houses a museum dedicated to the panorama, as well as conference facilities and a well-provided gift shop.

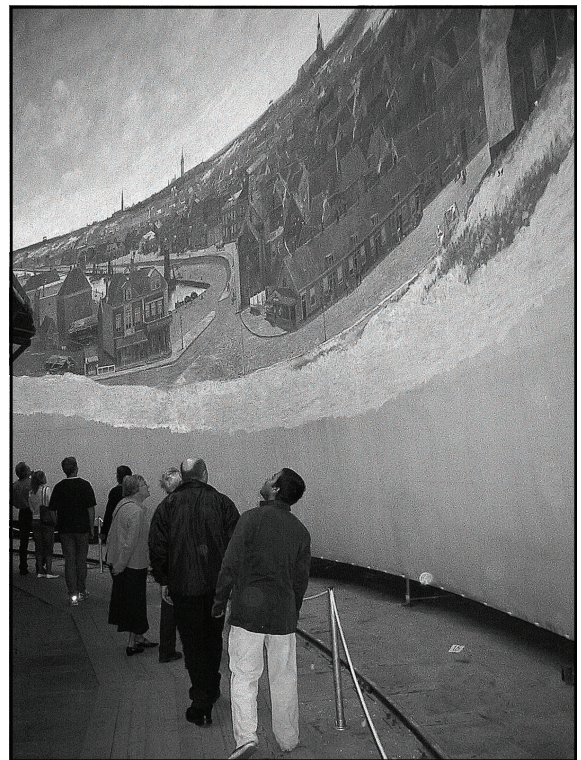
In addition to the conference sessions, there were side programs, including a rare ‘behind-the-scenes’ look at the Mesdag Panorama and a chance to experience a 360 degree media art panorama-in-progress. A highlight was a visit to James Turrell’s impressive land art piece Celestial Vault, located on the dunes by the seaside outside The Hague. Lying on one’s back on a stone bench, the visitor observes the sky and the surrounding horizon as if these constituted a painted panorama. The sea and the sky change places like a camera obscura image – a most memorable exercise in perception!

The conference itself was very professionally organized. The rich offerings included everything from the psychology of perception and media philosophy to papers on lost panoramas, 20th century panoramic systems like the Swissorama, panorama-related patents, panoramic media art and a demon-

stration of panoramic photography. There were speakers from all around the world, including Australia, Japan, Brazil, India, Europe and the United States.

Some of the highlights included Machiko Kusahara’s lecture on Japanese panoramas around 1900 and their relationship to peepshows, Rajorshi Ghosh’s paper on the amazing light displays of Chandannagar, India, and Mario Cesar Coelho’s account about the little known Brazilian panorama painter Victor Meirelles (1832-1903) and his lost panoramas. It was also interesting to learn about the ambitious panoramas realized at the Royal Academy of Arts, Gent, Brussels by professor Daniel Libens with his students. My own lecture dealt with “discursive panoramas” – the uses of the words “moving panorama” in literature and journalism.

All in all, the conference was an inspiring and refreshing experience. It was a chance to meet again international panoramaniacs I already knew and make new acquaintances. Above all, it convinced me that panoramas and dioramas are not things of the past. The historical creations continue to inspire generations of new creators, who keep on producing painted panoramas, but also look for totally new technological solutions.



Panorama conference participants on an unusual trip between the painting and the faux terrain at the Mesdag Panorama.

Photo by Erkki Huhtamo

Coda: return to the realm of the magic lantern

For the most persistent panoramaniacs there was a post-conference tour to Belgium to visit the panorama of the Battle of Waterloo and a recently identified 19th century panorama building in Brussels, converted to a public parkinghouse ! Instead of following this trail, I felt I had received a full dose of panoramas and decided to focus on my other love, the magic lantern.

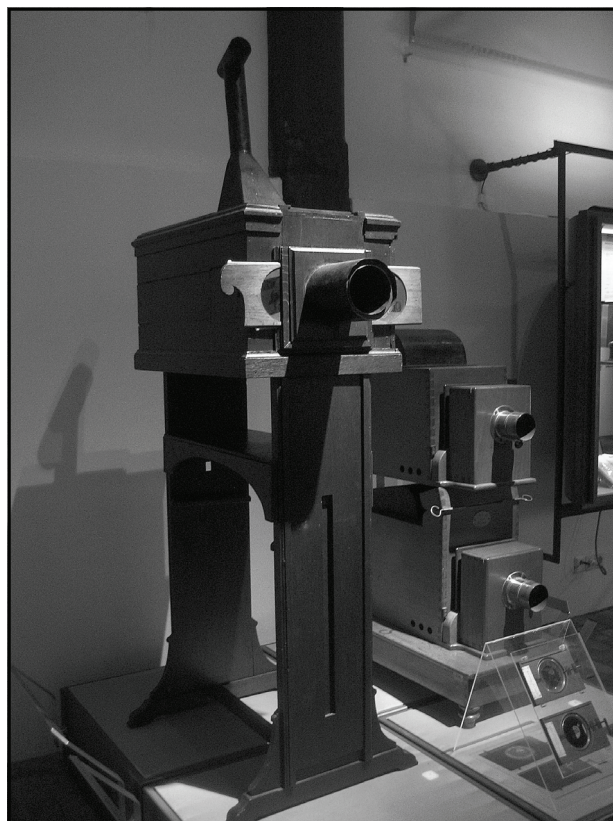
In The Hague I spent a memorable evening at “Nico’s magic lantern theater” with Henk Boelmans Kranenburg and Robert te Pas. Situated in Henk’s beautiful old house just a short walk from the seaside village of Scheveningen (the subject of the Mesdag panorama!), the place contains a complete bar and a cozy little theater; above the bar there is a loft that contains the projection equipment and Henk’s large slide collection. The place is covered by hundreds of magic lanterns of all sizes and types!

Nico’s magic lantern theater is not open to the public, but it can be rented for private parties and other festivities. In addition to bar service, Henk and Robert will present a magic lantern show as part of the package. To celebrate my visit, they performed for nearly an hour, using a staggering array of mechanical slides skillfully set to music. The collaboration worked seamlessly, Henk taking care of the lanterns and Rob providing the musical soundtrack.



Nico’s magic lantern theater in The Hague. Photo by Erkki Huhtamo.

The next morning I headed to Leiden, where the famous science museum De Boerhaave was offering a treat: as part of its temporary exhibition on optics it was displaying not just one, but two unique magic lanterns! The museum had borrowed from Haarlem’s Teyler’s Museum (another fabulous science museum, and the oldest public



Two unique lanterns, one by Jan van Musschenbroeck (ca. 1720, left) and the other by A. Kruess (ca. 1859, right). Photo by Erkki Huhtamo.

museum in Holland!) a spectacular biunial lantern made by the Hamburg firm A. Kruess. Bought by Teyler’s museum in 1859, it is one of the earliest vertical biunials in existence, made for demonstrations in large auditoria.

The main highlight was the oldest magic lantern known to survive: the massive oak projector very probably made by the Leiden scientific instrument maker Jan van Musschenbroeck for professor Willem Jacob’s Gravesande around 1720. The large lantern, mounted on a matching tall wooden stand, has been known to survive in the Boerhaave collection as part of Gravesande’s cabinet of physics, but it has rarely been shown in public – is the “magic lantern” perhaps too trivial an object for one of the most important museums of science to display?

Now that it is finally seen, it is amazing to notice how minutely it corresponds with the engraving published about it in Gravesande’s book *Physices Elementa Mathematica, Experimentis Confirmata* (Leiden 1721). Except for the light source and the focusing lens, everything is still there. Even the slide of a monstrous figure, shown in the engraving, has survived and is displayed with the lantern. With such unique objects, the history, shrouded in legends and myths, suddenly comes alive.

Hi Society!

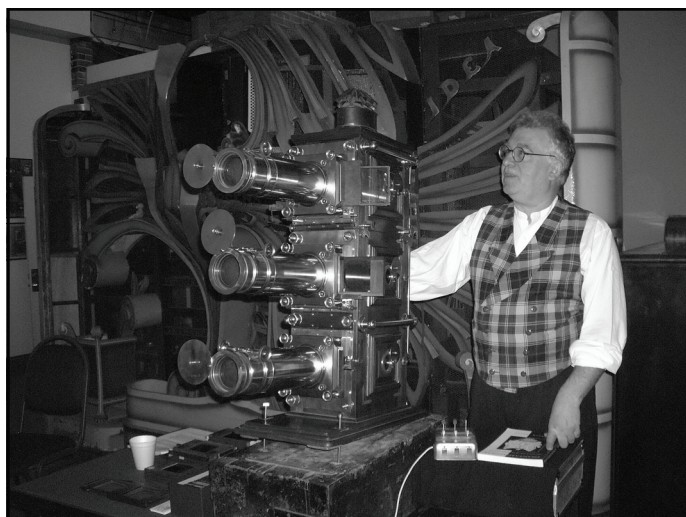
A communication from Mervyn Heard (Chairman of the other Magic Lantern Society)

Back in August my wife Jo and I were invited to present some shows in Revelstoke, B.C., as part of Revelstoke Railway Days. The invitation came from our long-time friends Lesley and David Evans, who recently decided to emigrate and set up home amid the majestic forests, lakes and mountains of British Columbia, forsaking the rainy, comparatively flat and over-populated country known as England. (For what reason I can't possibly imagine). Their wonderful new Nickelodeon Museum is right in the centre of the town and has already become the social hub of the community, offering local audiences a varied concert of mechanical music by day and bijou cinema entertainment by night, with vintage film and lantern performances.

It should be mentioned at this point that having planned our visit for some months, at the last moment it was touch and go as to whether the planned shows would take place at all, thanks to a terror alert at London's airports the weekend before we were due to leave. The British Airport Authority's immediate decision was not to allow any cabin luggage. This would have meant entrusting my slides to the baggage-handler's who, as you know, like to practice football passes with passengers' bags during tea breaks. I once transported my biunial to Turin in this manner and when it arrived it resembled kindling. (My tip to you: don't do it.). I did think about strapping the slides to my body, but realised that this would probably have been an even worse solution. In the end the rules were relaxed and we were able to put our suspicious packages in the overhead lockers.

The visit was a two-fold pleasure as it turns out – (or three if you include watching 'The Chainsaw Girl' wielding her heavy industrial machinery at the Revelstoke Forestry Museum). The central and more significant pleasure, was the opportunity to fraternise with certain members of the local (well, Seattle) contingent of the Society of the US and Canada. There was much fun and laughter and also a chance for me, in my other role as Chairman of The Magic Lantern Society to parley with your President – no not that one, the other one – Sharon Koch.

We started by agreeing that we don't talk enough, given that both Societies share the same basic interest, some of the same members and similar problems. In an attempt to identify and resolve some of these problems The British based Society invited Dick Balzer to carry out a health check after 30 years of existence. He solicited comments from all grass roots members and came up with a list of 15 specific recommendations. The Committee then discussed each of them and has implemented most of them.



Mervyn Heard in full magic-lantern lecture mode.

Some were easy to adopt such as better timekeeping at meetings and a fixed term of office for the Chair - (the recommendation to be formally accepted at the AGM is 5 years).

One cross-border issue concerned the impact of the internet. It was agreed that we needed to launch a new and improved website and take another look at Society auctions. Due largely to the impact of Ebay and other online auction activity, auctions have declined to such an extent that we no longer run them on a regular annual basis. We're still looking for a practical solution to that particular problem and don't easily expect to find one.

The effects of the internet on both our Societies is potentially beneficial but, ironically, at the same time, disadvantageous. We can now broadcast our interest internationally in the hopes of attracting more members. However there is the danger that there is so much information about the magic lantern available on the web, either directly or indirectly, through available publications, that joining a Society becomes less necessary. This is especially so if you live far away from the places where pockets of members regularly meet. Which leads us on to the most vexed issue of all arising from our review – recruitment; and in particular, the recruitment of younger members for whom the internet and other modern technologies are second nature and do not have the money to build up their own substantial collections.

In a recent discussion with Mark Butterworth, our new website manager, it was suggested that we put more pictures of meetings on the site to show exactly what we get up to and what fun can be had at quarterly gatherings. However, as Mark pointed out, this was more likely to be a turn-off to potential younger members who would simply see – beyond the machinery - a forest of grey hair and cardigans. We did

consider using Photo-shop to superimpose thick dark manes on persons such as myself and other nameless members of the committee – but it was felt that even extensive plastic surgery would not convince anyone that we were part of the young and thrusting iPod generation.

It was interesting, when I met with Sharon, to compare our own list of recruitment ideas, aimed specifically at attracting younger members, with the one which Terry Borton has drawn up for the US&C Society. Unsurprisingly many initiatives were more or less identical – direct approaches to students, special rates, publication packages, etc. But for me there is – always has been – a more fundamental issue which needs to be overcome before any of these approaches can really achieve maximum impact, and that is the whole problem of ‘lantern education’.

In my experience, film, media, art and social history students are still taught little or nothing about the heritage of the magic lantern. Cinema students are taught that in some way the magic lantern was merely a primitive optical toy or a minor sage in the development of the movie projector. They are not taught about its ‘live’ application and the many contexts of its work. So – to quote a well-known prime minister (soon to be an ex-prime minister) – ‘education, education, education’ – that must be our mission. There is some indication of change. During the last few years two major London art galleries have featured exhibitions on historical visual media. ‘Eyes, Lies and Illusions’ at the Hayward Gallery featured the Werner Nekes Collection – and was, incidentally, the most successful exhibition ever mounted at this gallery. Last year I was invited to construct a phantasmagoria installation for the Tate, as part of the Gothic Nightmares exhibition and I know, just from talking to younger members of the public (about 81,000 people visited the show) that it has opened many eyes.

We – that’s The MLS Society – are also currently looking into the possibility of running a series of our own lectures specifically for academics and students in London, possibly in 2008.

Sharon and I also spoke of ways for our two societies to forge a closer relationship. We tackled the thorny old issue of amalgamation, but didn’t think a complete fusing together of our two Societies was likely to be accepted by the sons and daughters of the Revolution. In fact, in some ways it runs counter to the trend of encouraging more widespread localised activity. That’s not to say that we should keep our distance. Sharon and I are both keen to improve upon the old established Anglo-American special relationship. One way, we hope, is through regular articles like these in respective newsletters. We are also exploring other ideas.

Another way of keeping in touch is to join both Societies of course. Look out for our new website – coming soon – at www.magiclantern.org.uk

A Letter From Our President

I am prompted to share some thoughts regarding my meeting in August with the *other* Society president, Mervyn Heard, who kindly sent a letter to our membership summarizing the results of our discussion.

Indeed, we established a mutual need to find solutions to expand our membership, not only to a younger generation, but to the population just waiting to be educated about the magic lantern and its importance in history. We discussed ideas and agreed to keep an open dialogue on our progress.

I feel that the need for more communication among our present members is a serious one. Members would feel more energized to share the passion for the lantern if they had a more organized way to do so. So I am proposing that we do two things. The first is to organize regional groups, not necessarily by state, but in areas where there are several members within driving distance of one another. The goal of these groups is to meet on a regular basis, share interests and ideas regarding the lantern, learn from each other, and get to know one another. I will undertake the coordination of this task. I encourage members to contact me if they feel that this could be done in their region.

The other step is to create a list of members across the US and Canada who give magic lantern shows and place this list on the website. Thus, people or groups who might want to have a lantern show for their meeting program can contact the person in their area. I will be contacting members to ask if they will agree to be placed on this list. I will also ask members who sell on eBay to include a statement about this service

In order to create interest among the younger set, it is possible to send out a flyer to public and private schools and PTA’s advertising our willingness to put on programs. Teachers and PTA-ers are always looking for new ways to inspire children. To those of you who do lantern shows, please try this type of contact and share with me whether you get a response. I have a sample flyer if you don’t want to create one. Mervyn and I had a great discussion about the possible impact our societies could have if we put our minds to it. I want to encourage our members to take this subject seriously. We, and I’m sure you, don’t want the lantern to become a forgotten aspect of history.

I encourage you to share your ideas on this topic. Write or email me. Let’s see what we can do together to bring the lantern to life!

Sharon Koch

A Dissertation on Magic Lanterns

Magic Lantern historians and enthusiasts may like to know that my 2003 doctoral thesis *Consuming Illusions: The Magic Lantern in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand 1850-1910* (2003) can now be accessed on-line at:

http://eprints.infodiv.unimelb.edu.au/es/index.php?action=show_detail_eprint;id=2203

As the title indicates, the primary material used in the thesis was located in Australia and New Zealand. However, as a social, historical survey of magic lantern practice through the second half of the nineteenth century in a predominantly Anglo culture, the thesis addresses a number of themes and issues which are equally relevant in a North American context.

Dr. Elizabeth Hartrick
Honorary Fellow
The Australian Centre
The University of Melbourne
4 / 1 Valiant St
Abbotsford, Victoria 3067, Australia

harte@unimelb.edu.au

A Magic Lantern Auction in Vienna

Westlicht Photographic Auction in Vienna will be offering more than 900 lots of photographic and magic lantern collectibles on November 18, 2006. Included are many items from the famous Spira Collection, including over 1100 magic lantern slides, a rare 18th century level-operated phantasmagoria slide, a triunial lantern, several smaller lanterns, one of the few Charles Urban spirograph projectors known to exist, a praxinoscope theater, and other optical devices. An illustrated online catalog will be available at www.westlicht-auction.com.

Magic Lantern Auctions in London

Christies in South Kensington will hold an auction of cameras, magic lanterns, and optical toys on November 22, 2006. On January 22, 2007, Christies will auction the Thomas Ganz Collection of magic lanterns, optical toys, and pre-cinema devices, the single most important collection of such material ever offered for sale. For further details, go to www.christies.com.

Mystery Lantern Slide



Bob Bishop sends this unusual slide announcing a series of lectures on Rome by the Rev. J.B. Moskopp. He would like to know if any readers know anything about Rev. Moskopp. Contact Bob Bishop, 606 E. 4th St., Port Angeles, WA 98362.

I searched the online database of 19th century periodicals, which includes many church-related publications, but I could not find any reference to this unusual name, so I suspect this was some local pastor, although where he lived is unknown—The Editor.

Erratum

In the article on magic lantern slides with an ice cream theme published in the May 2006 issue of the Gazette, the e-mail address of the author was printed incorrectly. Allan Mellis ("Mr. Ice Cream") is eager to locate additional slides relating to ice cream. He can be contacted at mellisfamily@rcn.com, or 1115 West Montana St., Chicago, IL 60614-2220. Phone: 773-327-9123.





Scenes from Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*,
from the performance by the American Magic-Lantern
Theater. Lantern slides by Joseph Boggs Beale.

Courtesy of Terry and Debbie Borton